FADE IN:

INT. BBC RADIO NEWSROOM - LATE MORNING

We are IN CLOSE as a story arrives on a press service teleprinter. A Hand tears away the sheet. The CAMERA TRACKS as we follow the story. It passes through the copytaster's hands and it passes on down to the summaries desk.
This is a time of steady activity. Journalists move about the room to consult. Others are writing in longhand, and several are dictating copy to typists, who are all women. One or two people - NEWSREADERS - sit about doing nothing. Much movement of paper.

Over the sound of typewriters and the murmur of dictating voices we HEAR a WOMAN'S VOICE over the P.A. Announce, "The Leader of the Opposition on five". A few journalists pick up their headsets, but they do not stop writing. We establish the atmosphere - laconic but efficient, and a little down-at-heel.

At the summaries desk we find JAMES PENFIELD. He stands to the side of a little behind a seated secretary, dictating in a laconic deadpan voice from a sheet of scrawled longhand.

JAMES
Between fifty and sixty scrap metal workers are..

The phone rings. James snatches it and answers without breaking stride.

JAMES
Hello. Newsroom.

The secretary waits, her face totally inexpressive.

JAMES
Who? Paul Dean? He doesn't work here anymore.

ANOTHER JOURNALIST
(calling over his shoulder as he passes)
Went to IRN.

JAMES
No. No. Sorry. Try IRN.

He drops the receiver and continues. The secretary reactivates.

JAMES
..reported to have landed illegally on the island of South Georgia in the South Atlantic.

The Foreign Office reacted sceptically to reports that Argentine Government was planning..

INT. NEWSROOM - LATE MORNING

James and a newsreader (one of those we saw earlier doing
nothing) stand together by the photocopier. Walking with controlled haste and carrying the news sheets, they head towards the studio. A clock behind them shows two minutes to twelve.

INT. STUDIO - LATE MORNING

James and the newsreader sit at a table in the studio, fairly close together. The newsreader settles himself behind the microphone. James sits back, professionally bored, rolling a stub of a pencil between his fingers.

Through a large loudspeaker we hear a Radio 4 programme winding up. Theme music.

The newsreader has a plummy authoritative voice and is a year or two younger than James. He stares down at the news sheet.

From the Control Room a woman announces "One Minute".

JAMES
How's Mary?

NEWSREADER
(stung then recovering)
Oh, she's well. Jolly well.
Thanks. Very well indeed.

From the Studio Controller's POV we SEE the Newsroom behind James and the newsreader, who chat soundlessly.

MOMEN'S VOICE
Before the news at twelve o'clock, there's just time to tell you about Woman's Hour this afternoon. Commander Freddy Bracknell will be talking about his four years as a German POW in Stalag Three, and mountaineer John Clayton will be reliving the thrills and perils of Everest. Also, Polly Morrell will be finding out from the historian Professor John Gerty how the governments of Eastern Europe distort their recent past in history books to suit their present policies and allegiances. That's Freddy Bracknell, John Clayton and John Gerty, all on Woman's Hour just after two o'clock this afternoon. The six pips. The sweep hand of the clock. The red light.

NEWSREADER
BBC News at twelve o'clock. There
is cautious optimism in Brussels
that formula may be reached to
break--

EXT. BRIXTON - LATE AFTERNOON

James hurries home through the din of rush hour Brixton.

INT. JAMES' FLAT - LATE AFTERNOON

James' flat is one floor of a large Victorian house. The
decent-sized rooms knocked together make a very large
bedsit room. Bare boards, junk furniture, but elegant.
Heavy stereo stack, a lot of records, a lot of paperbacks.

In high spirits, James prepares to go out. He chooses a
shirt, begins to undress. The TV is on.

INT. JAMES' FLAT - NIGHT

An hour later. James is dressed to go out. The big room
is now in darkness except for the light by James' armchair.
He is talking on the phone to his friend Jeremy Hancock.

JAMES
C'mon, you promised...tell her
you've got to finish a piece...I
know...I know, but it's my big
night...yes she's going to be
there...C'mon! All I want you to
do is introduce me to her. And
remember, build me up...good man.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - NIGHT

A high-ceilinged room in a publishing house, Bloomsbury.
A launch party. About forty guests. Waiters take round
trays with glasses of wine. By some large double doors is
display of school textbooks. Most prominently featured
is the book being launched today - Goldbooks Schools Series
No. 5 The Cold War, edited by Professor J. Gerty.

James is led by a PERSONAL ASSISTANT through the crowd to
meet GOLD, who is surrounded by ATTENTIVE YOUNG MEN.

GOLD
.....took him by the elbow, steered
him into a quiet corner and said
"Where do you think you are, young
man? Fabers?"

From the circle of polite laughter, Gold extends his hand
towards James.

GOLD
Glad you could come.
PERSONAL ASSISTANT
James Penfield.

GOLD
Good, good. Now is someone getting you a drink.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT
Wrote the Berlin Airlift chapter.

Job done, P.A. fades.

GOLD
I know, I know! Gentlemen, let me introduce you to one of our most talented contributors to The Cold War. James Penfield. He wrote the opening chapter, on 'The Berlin Airlift'. One of the best chapters in the book.

JAMES
Hello.

GOLD
I won't introduce you all by name. Basically James, this is our UK sales team. What was I saying? Yes, these graduate trainees...

Twenty minutes later. JEREMY has just come in and is surveying the room from the doorway. He takes a drink from a tray, notices James across the room and smiles ruefully.

Jeremy Hancock is a journalist, same age as James, good-looking and well-dressed. A fairly corrupt look about him, despite this. He is intelligent and intensely self-regarding.

James makes his way through the crowd towards Jeremy. They stand on the doorway - a position which affords them a good view of the guests in the room and those guests who are still arriving by way of a grand and ornate stairway.

JEREMY
My dear James.

With mock solemnity, he kisses James on the cheek.

JAMES
Not here.

JEREMY
To the airlift.

JAMES
To the airlift.

JEREMY
Any sign of the goddess Barrington?

JAMES
Not yet you know any of these people?

JEREMY
One or two. A grey lot. Some social democrats. Some diligent anti-communists. A political section man from the US Embassy. And this exquisite Californian wine, courtesy of the CIA.

JAMES
Nonsense.

They look across the room at Gold being listened to.

JEREMY
By the way, I hear that your Mr. Gold is about to become very rich. I hope you told him that most of the ideas in your Berlin airlift chapter came from me.

JAMES
Fuck off.

SUSAN (O.S.)
So it's all worked out perfectly...

JAMES
That's her.

The two men go to the head of the stairs to watch SUSAN come up.

SUSAN
She get's the house, he get's the cars. And the baby is still in Switzerland with the Au pair.

SUSAN BARRINGTON is in her late twenties. Flamboyant, effortlessly confident, she inhabits that special world - with its different rules - of the truly ambitious. James fascination owes as much to the certainties of her class as to her looks.

An attractive young man accompanies her up the stairs. Jeremy makes a sound. Susan Glances up.

SUSAN
Jeremy!

She waves and her elbow catches a tray of champagne being carried downstairs. Glasses fall about her feet. While apologising, Susan does not take her eyes off Jeremy.

SUSAN
How Stupid! I am sorry.

The butler and the young man drop to the ground and set about picking up the glasses. Susan regards them for a moment, then steps round them and hurries up the stairs.

Jeremy and Susan go into a clinch, with kisses. James stands a few feet off.

SUSAN
Jeremy! How Fantastic.

JEREMY
Darling Susan.

SUSAN
You're so famous now.

JEREMY
And you're so beautiful. What are you doing here?

SUSAN
We're thinking of doing this current affairs thing for schools. World history since 1945. Twelve programmes, lots of stock film.

JEREMY
In that case, you should meet my very dear friend, James Penfield. Brilliant analyst of recent history and a world authority on the Berlin Airlift.

James and Susan say "Hi" and shake hands.

SUSAN
Was that your chapter, then? It was very good.

JAMES
Thank you. We met last week, at the Wajda film. You won't remember. We didn't actually speak.

SUSAN
(not remembering)
Yes, that's right. I'm being terribly rude. Bob? Oh, Bob.
This is Bob Tuckett. Bon was at Oxford too.

Bob, Jeremy, James all say "Hi". Momentarily enthusiasm flags, no one speaks. Then the drinks tray is suddenly in their midst and they all reach out thankfully, with mock groans of relief and surprise.

An hour later, Guests are leaving. James has got Susan alone. They descend the stairs. CLOSE ON Susan, a disparate kind of seriousness.

SUSAN
I mean, in many ways I'm right behind the women's movement. But sometimes I wish they'd get on with it instead of moaning on. The office was split right down the middle. I mean, as a woman I understood what they were saying, that current affairs was all about what men did, but as a human being and a television researcher, as a professional, I could just sense they'd got it all wrong. I could see there were two paths I could go down, power or not-power. Down the not-power path was lot of sisterly feeling, masochism and frustration. Down the other path, I could keep on working. So of course I voted with the men and the other women all resigned. I think they're mad, don't you?

They arrive by the front door. There is the briefest pause. James makes his bid.

JAMES
Can I give you a lift?

SUSAN
No, it's all right. I can get a cab. Night night.

James stands in the doorway and watches her go.

EXT. OXFORD CIRCUS - DAY

An abrupt transition. Morning rush hour, Brixton Underground station to Oxford Circus. James fights his way through the crowd up the underground steps leading to the street. He is late.

EXT. LANGHAM PLACE - DAY

James runs away from CAMERA towards Broadcasting House.
INT. NEWS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Same time, Moulded plastic chairs are ranged along the walls of the room. Some journalists stand, some are half asleep. The feel of a morning assembly.

Seated at the only desk, by the door, sits the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, While waiting he pretends to look at papers.

The tone of these meetings is restrained, weary.

The Editor speaks with short pauses between each point. Quietly, as though talking to himself.

EDITOR

Use of this word "finally". We've had this one before. Difficult when it gets...

James come in. The Editor ignores him pointedly. There are no more seats. James stands somewhere inconspicuous.

EDITOR

...when it gets too close to 'finally' the main points of the news... Now today. Not very sexy list. We can't live off all these court cases...Royals...What's Charles giving Diana for her birthday?

1ST. JOURNALIST

He's not telling.

EDITOR

Better follow him around, I suppose.

2ND. JOURNALIST

Newcastle is following Charles to see if anyone throws a bottle at his car like last time.

EDITOR

Good... Now, I'm going to drop this panda business unless something happens soon.

2ND. JOURNALIST

We've got two people down the zoo looking into the cage.

EDITOR

Give it one more day. These scrap iron merchants on, where is it, Gritviken Anything in that?
JAMES
Could be.

EDITOR
Let's keep an eye on it then.
Okay, I'm just thinking aloud.
Let's take the list in order.
Cabinet reshuffle. Chris?

1ST JOURNALIST
Bob is ringing round the ministries
finding out where everyone is going
to be. That'll come to fruition
later this morning. John'll be at
Caxton Hall. We'll try and lay on
a radio car.

Through this last speech we CLOSE IN on James. Behind his
news prospects sheet he is reading a letter. We glimpse
the letter heading: 'GOLDBOOKS'

EDITOR
Prime Minister is on the Jimmy
Young Show at ten-thirty. We should
get something out of that. Now,
matter Irish...

INT. JAMES' FLAT - EVENING

James is clearing a desk he has against a wall, in
preparation for work on his Suez book. It is a desk that
has not seen much use before, piled high with clutter. He
brings over a lamp for it, arranges the typewriter in its
centre. Various London library books are arranged along
one edge.

On the wall above the desk, James pins a large map of Europe
and the Mediterranean. He sits at the desk, lines up a
couple of pencils...and picks up a book.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Langan's, Piccadilly. Gold and James are met at the door
by the HEAD WAITER, Gold is obviously known here.
Businessmen, media people, agents, conspiracy, urgency,
babble. Cornucopia too - dessert trolley, cheese trolley,
something being flambe'yd at a table.

ANOTHER SHOT through the diners we find Gold and James
already seated. The main course has been cleared away. A
clock shows the time to be ten to three.

JAMES
I was only ten years old at the
time, but it was the first
international crises I can remember.
It's obviously a key point, and I've always thought that sooner or later we would have to re-examine Suez in the light of subsequent events. And now, suddenly, with this Falklands business on us, it's quite clear we do need to take another look at 1956. The way I see the book is that it would get away completely--

The waiter has wheeled up the dessert trolley. Gold has been examining it for the last few seconds before breaking in.

GOLD
Would you like a dessert...I'm having one.

JAMES
No thanks. I'd like to break away--

GOLD
I'll have some of that.

JAMES
...break away completely from--

GOLD
And some of that. Sorry.

JAMES
...from all the moralising and talk of national humiliation that is now the standard line on Suez...

Gold has a great forkful of gateau near his face.

GOLD
Yes...You're not a socialist then?

JAMES
No. I'd want to--

GOLD
Good.

JAMES
I'd want to set out events as they happened. The way I see it is this: the British Empire was an ideal. It may have become totally obsolete by the middle of this century, but it wasn't totally dishonourable to try and defend its remains and try and salvage some self-respect, which is what I
think the Conservatives were trying to do. Then there's the essential--

GOLD
Are you going to have coffee?

JAMES
Yes, please.

GOLD
And you'll join me in a sambucca?

JAMES
Thank you.

Gold speaks to the waiter as James continues.

JAMES
...there's the business of the British collusion with Israel. Of course it's proved beyond all doubt now, but I want to set it in the context of diplomacy and warfare. I mean, if you're about to attack one country, it makes sense to encourage neighbouring countries to attack it to. The French understood this. They could never--

The waiter brings the coffee. Gold is lighting a cigar, having offered one to James.

JAMES
The French could never make out all the embarrassment and breast-beating of the British. My enemy's enemy is my friend. It's as simple as that. If we had not been so scrupulous we would not have been so ashamed.

The waiter brings the sambuccas. We CLOSE IN on the drinks as James goes on talking. Gold puts a match to James's drink on this next line.

JAMES
Now it's as if we discovered ourselves again. We're acting independently when the standard line has always been that after Suez we couldn't lift a finger without the Americans.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Gold and James stroll through the arcade, bloated from their lunch. Both are slightly drunk. Gold is expansive.
GOLD
Personally James, I'm very excited by this new arrangement we have. It gives us direct access to literally hundreds of American collages. Twentieth century history is a growth area over there, don't ask me why. Your readership will be first and second year American collage students...

JAMES
Freshman and sophomores...

GOLD
You know the lingo. Jolly good. So your language will have to be simple, not stupid, mind, but simple, very, very simple, and always remember it's an American readership.

JAMES
Like I was saying, the American angle in Suez is very important. I wouldn't want to say they let us down. I think that's wrong. A good ally is one who doesn't back you up in your mistakes, who tells you when to pull back. And the Americans were good allies. Simple as that.

James is immensely pleased with his own performance during this speech. Gold, however, is more interested in something he has seen in a shop window. As soon as James finishes, Gold mumbles an apology and plunges into the shop. James follows him in.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

A lull in the action. Most of the journalists are eating out. A few eat sandwiches, smoke, chat, read. A background television shows crowd scenes from Argentina.

James sits with a plastic cup of coffee reading intently.

He stands at the window looking out over the roofs. Then he turns abruptly, picks up a telephone and dials.

JAMES
Is that London Midweek? Susan Barrington.

EXT. A SUBURBAN STREET - NORTHWEST LONDON - DAY
James turns off the street up the front path of a nondescript per-war semi.

INT. JAMES'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

MR. PENFIELD comes into the hall to answer the door. He is tired-looking man in his sixties. James enters. The two men fumble awkwardly between a handshake and an embrace. It is James who favours the former.

MR. PENFIELD
Hello, Jimmy.

JAMES
Dad.

MR. PENFIELD
Come into the kitchen. I'm just making your mother's tea.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mr. Penfield fusses inexpertly at the stove. James leans in the doorway.

JAMES
So how is she?

MR. PENFIELD
Well, she doesn't complain much. You know what she's like. She keeps asking when you're coming...

JAMES
I'm sorry about Saturday, Dad. It was just impossible to get away.

MR. PENFIELD
Oh she knows you're very busy, especially now, with everything going on...the doctor said to try her on solids, but she's been right off her food...You take this up to her. Tell her you made it. She'll like that.

James picks up the tray - tinned tomato soup, buttered bread, and a cup of tea.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

MRS. PENFIELD lies on her back, dozing. She is plainly very ill. James sits at the bedside. The tray of food cools on a bedside table. We have a sense of time passing.

Mrs. Penfield opens her eyes. James kisses her on her cheeks.
MRS. PENFIELD
Jimmy. I knew you'd come today.
I said to Dad this morning, that boy'll be here this morning, just you see. He said don't get your hopes up, but I knew...

This speech appears to exhaust her. Hey eyes close. She keeps hold of James's hand. She murmurs.

MRS. PENFIELD
Have you got to do straight off?

JAMES
No, not yet.

MRS. PENFIELD
Good...stay here a bit.

James sits. His mother falls into a deep sleep.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - EVENING

Mr. Penfield sits drinking tea and watching TV. He stands when James enters and turns the set off.

JAMES
She's asleep.

Mr. Penfield indicates a seat to James.

MR. PENFIELD
Everyone's been marvellous really, Jimmy. The neighbours come and sit with her while I'm at work.

JAMES
That's good.

MR. PENFIELD
And Joe Ramage - do you remember him? He comes and helps out in the shop.

JAMES
Yes, you said.

MR. PENFIELD
Now, are you going to have some more tea?

JAMES
No, thanks Dad.

MR. PENFIELD
Or a beer. I've got some in.
James shakes his head. There is a long awkward silence, a hopeless silence that is particular to both father and son. Finally James gets to his feet.

JAMES
I've got to be going. I've got a meeting tonight.

MR. PENFIELD
The bed's all made up if you want to stay.

JAMES
I'll ring you in the next couple of days.

Mr. Penfield stands and nods. This is a familiar exchange. Finish on him.

INT. BARBICAN ARTS COMPLEX - AFTERNOON

James and Susan arrive at the Barbican together. Their conversation is a little detached from its subject matter. They are feeling each other out. They are not disagreeing here. As they talk they make a complicated route through the Arts Centre, always on the verge of getting lost.

JAMES
What did you think of that Wadja film?

SUSAN
I quite liked it. I wasn't as enthusiastic as everyone else.

JAMES
I thought it was tremendous.

SUSAN
I think it went on rather too long.

JAMES
I couldn't bear for it to end.

SUSAN
And I didn't like that man.

JAMES
Oh, but he was terrific.

SUSAN
And the shape of it all. It was sort of...shapeless.

JAMES
Really? I thought those long
flashbacks were extremely good.

INT. LIFT - AFTERNOON

JAMES
You don't like flashbacks because your mother's a historian.

SUSAN
Good theory. But I like my mother. I have no aversions to what she does.

JAMES
Too bad. What did your father do?

SUSAN
My real father? Well, he was a flashback.

They laugh as they step out of the lift.

INT. BARBICAN ART GALLERY - LATE AFTERNOON


The paintings - painfully pretentious - represent various forms of aesthetic self-consciousness.

James and Susan look at the pictures, but make no reference to them. They spend a little time in front of each one before moving to the next. James speech is broken by moments of contemplation. As they move on again, he picks up his thread.

JAMES
Everyone describes the same process. At first it is exciting. You're at the centre of the world. As soon as anything happens, you're the first to know about it. And there are deadlines a dozen times a day, even more, and that's intimidating and exciting. Then you get the hang of it and the excitement wears off. You're a clerk in a rather dowdy Office. There's none of the glamour of television, or the penetration of serious journalism. You're a processor of semi-official news. Some people leave at this stage. Then, if you hang on, and especially if you're promoted, you discover a new kind of pleasure. You're pleased by the ease with which you can write
summaries and bulletins from news agency printouts, by the way you can judge length. Ending a broadcast on the dot, having everything run smoothly, selecting a running order that makes sense, knowing instinctively what you can and cannot do. Professionalism.

SUSAN
And you're at this third stage

JAMES
No, there's a fourth. Numbness. You do everything right, but you feel nothing either way.

SUSAN
I think you're exaggerating. And if you aren't, you should jolly well change your job.

JAMES
Oh yes?

SUSAN
Yes. You're much too old to making a drama out of alienation, or whatever you call it. You've got to take responsibility for your own happiness. That's what I think anyway.

Susan has moved on a couple of steps and is bending forwards to look at a picture. James smiles at her wonderingly, a little deflated, but impressed.

INT. JAMES' FLAT - EVENING

Jeremy is sprawled in a chair with a drink. James is standing. Muted piano music from the stereo. EDWARD has just entered. The other two have been waiting for him.

JAMES
It's the Poet Laureate himself.

Edward approaches. He is a contemporary of the other two, but looks much younger and less worldly in manner. He is slightly nervous. He works on a literary magazine and he is a poet whose work is just beginning to be recognised.

The three are old friends. Jeremy and James keep up their friendship with Edward because they recognise his talent, and this makes them feel more authentic. Edward keeps up with them because he is lonely and his own life is rather dull. However, he does distrust them a little. And they keep his talent in place by teasing him.
As Edward enters the other two applaud.

JEREMY
How sweet.

Edward makes a nervous mock bow.

EDWARD
Thank you. Have you two been smoking that illegal stuff again?

James pours wine into Edward's glass.

JAMES
We were admiring your poem in the TLS, Edward.

EDWARD
Ah, yes.

JEREMY
It's terribly good.

EDWARD
Don't tell me you've actually read it, Jeremy.

James picks up the TLS and waves it at Edward.

JEREMY
Committed to memory. Forever.

EDWARD
I see.

JAMES
Blasé and epicene.

JEREMY
We were just chortling over that. Blasé and epicene. It perfectly describes the new Foreign Secretary. So—I hope you don't mind, Edward, I pinched it for my piece today.

EDWARD
Attributed?

JEREMY
Of course.

EDWARD
Why, is there a new Foreign Secretary? Who was the old one anyway?
JEREMY
It needn't concern you, Edward. James has got some news. He needs a poet's advice.

Jeremy pats a seat. Edward sits down.

JAMES
C'mon. I don't want any Jones about this.

JEREMY
No jokes. James is in love.

EDWARD
Congratulations. Who with?

JEREMY
A glamorous young lady way above his station...

JAMES
Bastard.

JEREMY
Name so Susie Barrington. Daughter of the eminent historian, Anne Barrington, step-daughter of the scandalous Matthew Byrd the acclaimed sack-artist...

Lay over Jeremy's account on next scene and FADE DOWN SLOWLY.

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - LATE EVENING


Susan is pouring coffee. James sits across from her, jacket off, sunk in cushions.

JEREMY'S VOICE OVER RECEDES.

SUSAN
Mummy and I, we were more like lovers, really, or sisters. Then a couple of years after Daddy died, and not long after I left Oxford, she started seeing various men and I was furious. I really was upset. I stopped going home. I never phoned. I went round telling everyone how awful her books were. And she hardly seemed to notice, and that made me angrier. Then I
got a job I was interested in, and
I started to see lots of men, and
I suppose I grew up a little and
began to understand. So I wrote
her a long letter, almost seven
pages, saying how sorry I was, and
how I was worried that we were
drifting apart. And do you know,
she wrote me a poem, a really
beautiful poem about mothers and
daughters.

JAMES
How nice.

SUSAN
It makes me weepy just to remember
it. So we were fine again, and
then she got married to Matthew
who's a womaniser and a bit of a
yob, but quite nice really, makes
TV commercials. What about yours.

JAMES
Both dead.

SUSAN
That must be rather nice, in a
way. I mean, you don't have any--

The door bell RINGS loudly.

SUSAN
Damn. They're early.

JAMES
Who?

SUSAN
I called you a taxi.

JAMES
Very thoughtful.

SUSAN
(a gesture of
helplessness)
Well, you know...

EXT. FRONT DOOR - SUSAN'S FLAT - NIGHT

A minute later, James and Susan stand at the front door.
Portico and steps down to the street. Taxi waits. They
kiss, Susan draws back.

JAMES
Again?
SUSAN
Yes, if you like. Call me at work.

James descends the stairs. Susan closes the door.

INT. COCKTAIL BAR - EARLY EVENING

A cocktail bar, a self-conscious imitation of the American model. James and Jeremy sit on high stools at the bar. Tall colourful drinks are being set down in front of them. On a TV there are scenes of the departing Royal Navy fleet.

JEREMY
To the Fleet.

JAMES
To the Fleet.

JEREMY
And the Argies.

JAMES
The Argies.

Jeremy reaches into his inside pocket and pulls out an envelope.

JEREMY
Now, top secret file.

JAMES
(reaching for it)
Come on. Hand over.

Jeremy outs the envelope out of James's reach.

JEREMY
Uh-huh. Tell me what you think of this first.

JAMES
It's shit.

JEREMY
You approve!

JAMES
Let me see.

JEREMY
Get way. You'll see when I'm ready. First I want you to reflect on my noble behaviour, on how your interests are closest to my heart, how I lay awake at night worrying--
JAMES
Jeremy, just let me see what you've got.

JEREMY
You're so hard. All right then. I was chatting to some people from the diary page, and the name of Barrington came up. I expressed an interest...

JAMES
Oh yes.

JEREMY
...an innocent interest, and found out that last year Vogue ran a series called 'Mothers and Daughters' Number seven, Anne and Susan Barrington. Being a decent loving friend I went to the files and made a copy for you.

JAMES
Let me see.

JEREMY
Ah, ah. There's more. The piece celebrates the undying affection between eminent left-wing historian and he dazzling daughter. Then the news editor, who happened to be in the room, said that years ago, when he worked on The Guardian, Anne Barrington had written a very good piece on...guess...Suez. It was 1966, the tenth anniversary.

Jeremy hands over the envelope which James now opens.

JEREMY
She's never written a book in it, but she clearly knew a lot.

JAMES
Mmm...

JEREMY
It's obvious what you have to do. Your way into the daughter's pants is through the mother, up the Suez canal...

JAMES
You're so gross.

JEREMY
She's very nice, apparently. Lives in Norfolk. And very left-wing. You'll have to watch yourself there.

JAMES
Ha ha...

JEREMY
According to this, the daughter goes up to stay quiet often. You'll need to get yourself invited for the right weekend.

JAMES
You've really got it all worked out, haven't you?

JEREMY
No need to thank me, if you don't want to. Just pay for these drinks.

BARMAN
That'll be eleven pounds, sir

INT. POLYTECHNIC - DAY

James walks along a busy corridor in a polytechnic. In a recess to one side is a games room. Along the walls are Space Invader machines by the dozen. Students stand at the machines intently, their faces illuminated by the glow. We see some expertly handled Space Invader action. James approaches one of the players and asks directions. Without looking up the student points down the corridor.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

James stands outside the doors or a lecture hall. Inside a lecture is in progress. We catch a few words.

James pushes the door open.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

The LECTURER glances back and acknowledges his presence.

James stands at the back of the hall for the end of the lecture.

LECTURER
A vacuum had been created. If the United States did not fill it, it was assumed the Russians would.
(A beat)
Next week I shall be considering the extent to which the behaviour of nation states or governments may be judged by the moral criteria
we normally apply to individuals.
Thank you.

The students stand and begin to move out. James and the Lecturer move towards each other and shake hands.

INT. LECTURER'S ROOM - DAY

James and the Lecturer sit separated by a low table. A tape-recorder is on the Lecturer's side of the table.

LECTURER
Well, what you need to understand--

JAMES
No, sorry, could you lean forward a bit when you speak.

LECTURER
Oh. Is this all right? Um...you see, through the early autumn of 1956 the Egyptians were running the canal, their canal, that is, quite efficiently. Traffic was passing through unimpeded, for Nasser didn't want to provide the West with any reason for invading his country. Is that loud enough, by the way?

JAMES
It's okay.

LECTURER
Right. So by the time the British and French launched their invasion at the beginning of November the main economic reasons for doing so had largely evaporated. What remained, especially for the British, were the more marginal and emotional arguments.

INT. JAMES'S FLAT - EVENING

The Lecturer's voice continues on the tape. James pours a drink and he listens and walks towards his desk.

LECTURER (V.O.)
(from tape)
Using the language of private behaviour you could say that this was an affair of the heart - the idea was to teach Nasser a lesson, to appear capable of acting independently, and to maintain face in the world, particularly
James switches the tape recorder off. He picks up the Vogue 'Mothers and Daughters' article and pins it to the map of Egypt.

INT. A COMMUNITY HALL - EVENING

A poetry reading, given by Edward Long, has just come to and end. There are about fifty present, and empty chairs behind. Jeremy and James are in the audience.

Edward is reading the last stanza of a poem.

EDWARD
(reading)
"And so the ferry moves across the bay, Top heavy as a wedge of wedding cake, Leaving us to return to our hotels, Gulls in nautical trim cry their farewells, Then drop with avaricious eyes to tale, Souvenirs from the debris of the day."

He pauses.

EDWARD
Thank you very much.

There is earnest applause which peters out. Now, a tense silence.

Edward stares impassively at the audience until he catches the movement of a half-raised arm.

EDWARD
Yes.

The questioner is a middle-class middle-aged woman, rather twittery.

WOMAN
Me?

EDWARD
Yes.

WOMAN
Oh, yes, well I thought I'd start the thing off by asking, you know, and you'll probably think it's a stupid question that you get all the time, but could you tell us a little of how you actually get ideas, I mean, your poems are quiet extraordinary and beautiful and I wondered how they, well, you know,
came about.

During this, Jeremy has caught James's eye and they have started to giggle silently. This continues through the scene. They hunch up and turn away from each other, shaking quietly, half recover, become aware of each other, or of the absurdity of the questions, or of Edward's attempts to deal with them, and they fold up once more. From Edward's POV we SEE their heads duck down.

EDWARD
It isn't a stupid question, but it is a difficult one to answer. I get ideas in much the same way as anyone does. Perhaps the difference is that I take them more seriously. I write them down - odd scraps of things. Then I seem to know when I'm ready to start work on a poem. It takes shape to start work on a poem. It takes shape as I write it, very slowly.

While Edward answers, the woman nods vigorously.

James and Jeremy recover in the brief pause between questions. They lift tear-stained faces, then crack up at the next question.

A young man, anorak, flat auto-didact's 'does the team think' voice. A piece of paper in hand, he stands, trembling.

MAN
You are one of the most praised poets of your generation of younger poets, and the Sunday Times has called you a cross between Dante and Philip Larkin. What is your reaction to this?

EDWARD
Well, it's silly really.
(catching sight of Jeremy and James)
It's journalism, yes?

A serious-looking student has his hand raised.

STUDENT
Yes. What is the poet's role in society today?

CLOSE ON James, drawing breath. A sudden sharp yelp from Jeremy fighting for air. All heads turn. The two are almost off their seats onto the floor. We move CLOSE ON them and hear their moans or 'No', 'No' and 'Stop', 'stop'
and 'Sorry!'

INT. NEWSROOM - LATE MORNING

The newsroom. The teleprinters. The sheets arriving on the copytaster's desk. On the TV monitor there are pictures of the Fleet. On the P.A. a voice announces 'Edward Du Cann on Four'.

We find PHILIP standing by the bulletin desk. He is a graduate trainee, 23 years old. Earnest in manner, slightly ingratiating.

Immensely pleased with what he has just read, he moves towards the summaries desk with a piece of paper in each hand.

PHILIP
James, look at this. At last.

James is standing by a secretary dictating.

JAMES
Wait...and with talks at the United Nations still making little progress, tension and anxiety settled on MPs of all parties in Westminster. Speaking on the Jimmy Young Show earlier today, Mrs Thatcher said the prospects of a peaceful solution did not look encouraging. What is it?

PHILIP
Take a look at these.

James glances over the sheets.

JAMES
Not bad.

PHILIP
Fifteen news items. I got exactly the same running order as the bulletin desk. They're all old pros.

JAMES
Terrific.

Philip moves on to show someone else nearby. We hear him explain his triumph again.

James makes a gesture and expression of contempt for the benefit of the secretaries.

A group of journalists passes through. James catches one
of them by the arm.

JAMES
Can I use the phone in your office?

JOURNALISTS
Sure.

INT. OFFICE - LATE MORNING

A small bare office. A few minutes later, James is speaking on the phone to Susan.

JAMES
(into phone)
You're being very elusive...tell them you're ill...or leave early then...do it properly, tell them a lie...Okay, come when you can. You've got the address...yes, it will be nice. 'Bye..

INT. JAMES'S FLAT - NIGHT

Susan sits cross-legged in the centre of James's bed. James lies along one edge, head propped on elbows. They've been drinking coffee. We have the sense of a long evening of talk, but not much else so far. A pause before Susan speaks.

JAMES
Why not stay?

SUSAN
I have to be up early.
(She stands)

JAMES
Me too.

SUSAN
(straightening herself at the mirror. James standing close)
Two or three years ago I would have stayed. And fucked you.

JAMES
Too late. Just my luck.

He stands behind her and kisses her neck. She turns and they kiss. Susan pulls away. She taps James's nose with her forefinger.

SUSAN
Now I'm more wary. I must be
getting old.

She reaches for her coat. James helps her.

JAMES
You don't trust me.

SUSAN
I don't trust anyone. That's what comes of working in television.

JAMES
In radio we're different.

SUSAN
I bet. Thanks for the drink.

He opens the door.

JAMES
I might see you in Norfolk over the weekend.

SUSAN
(smiling)
You just might.

She closes the door on her smile.

INT. SQUASH COURT - DAY

A day later. A glass-fronted Squash Court. James and Jeremy are into a game. Both are inept and very unfit. We COME IN on a rally. Jeremy misses an easy ball and let's his racket drop. James sits down with his back to the wall. Jeremy gets his cigarettes from the corner of the court. They inhale smoke as if it were fresh air.

JEREMY
That's enough of that.

JAMES
We've been playing ten minutes for Christ sake.

JEREMY
Far too long.

A pause. Some keen SQUASH PLAYERS appear at the door, peer in and go away.

JAMES
What have you been up to?

JEREMY
Well, everyone's desperate for a new Falkland's angle. Purdy's
come up with a real dog. Worker's rights in Argentina. So I've been running round getting people to do things. But no one's keen. Workers rights. When did anyone on that paper give a damn about workers rights? I said to Purdy, "Look, tits, bingo, jingo, horoscope, sport, celebs, gossip and the occasional firm stand on--"

JAMES
The torture of small children--

JEREMY
On the torture of very small children, but don't start telling them about their rights--

JAMES
Hold those rights.

JEREMY
Tame those rights...you know, we're even freighting in a couple of exiled Argie trade unionists from Paris for a TV tie in. One of them had his balls tap-danced on by the secret police. The other one had to be hosed off the wall of his cell after the police--yes my good man?

A muscular COACH in a tracksuit, is rapping on the glass door. And opening it. He wears a towel around his neck.

JEREMY
I'm sorry. This is a private conversation. You'll have to wait outside.

COACH
You can't smoke in here. This is a squash court.

JEREMY
Well we booked it for a smoke, didn't we James?

JAMES
And we're not quiet finished.

COACH
Come on. Out!

A few players have gathered to watch outside.
JEREMY
The court is ours for another half hour. Please run along.

The coach advances into the court, picks up their rackets and stands over them. He pushes a racket under Jermey's chin.

COACH
I said, out.

JAMES
On the other hand, we might be more comfortable at the bar. I've got some news on Suez.

JEREMY (racket still under his chin)
A serious drunk might be of use, I suppose.

INT. JAMES' FLAT - MORNING

James adjusts his tie in the mirror. The PHONE RINGS, Lay over James's voice into SCENES 38 and 39.

JAMES
Ohm hello, Dad, I've been meaning to phone you. How is she?...Oh...in the night?...Oh God. What does the doctor say?...Look, I will, I will. I promise. But it's impossible at the moment, now with the crisis on. I'm working night and day...Look, tell her I'll come as soon as I can. I promise...Look, Dad, I've got to dash. Give her my love. Yes...bye.

EXT. BRIXTON - DAY

James walks down a Brixton street, down a narrow road to a set of lock-up garages. A group of black kids are playing football here. James steps round puddles, careful not to muddy his shoes. He scowls at the kids and unlocks his garage.

James backs his car out of the garage. An early sixties Jaguar saloon. He gets to close to the garage door. The game of football rages around his car, as if it was not there.

EXT. CAR WASH - DAY

Ten minutes later. A car wash. From the driver's POV we see the revolving brushes advance and engulf the car.
The phone conversation ends. James reaches down and pushes a tape into the car tape deck. We will HEAR the recording all through James's journey to SCENE 41.

LECTURER (V.O.)
(from tape)
You see, if we talk of a nation, like an individual, we can also speak of it acting deceitfully. Britain and France had entered into a secret agreement with the Arabs' deadly enemy, the Israelis. The agreement was signed or initialled by the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd on about October 23, at Sevres. The Israelis were to attack Egypt on an agreed date. British planes based in Cyprus were to precision bomb Egyptian airfields to protect Israeli cities from retaliation. After putting out an ultimatum to both side to withdraw to ten miles from the Canal, which of course the Egyptians would have to ignore since the Canal is 100 miles inside their territory, the British and the French would invade on the pretext of 'separating the combatants'. That became something of a catch phrase - 'Separating the combatants'.

EXT. CITY - DAY
James's car makes its way through the city.

EXT. M11 MOTORWAY - DAY

EXT. NORTH NORFOLK - DAY
An hour and a half later. James drives along a country road.

EXT. THE BARRINGTON HOUSE - DAY
A small BOY, TOM, peers over a wall at James's car as it sweeps into the drive.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY
Five minutes later. The Barrington house. The library. James waits alone. The house stands in its own grounds - an old rectory, spacious, but not over-grand. Much charm.
19th and 20th Century oil paintings, a serious reader's library. Pleasant disorder, but no squalor. There is one housekeeper.

Somewhere in the house a PHONE RINGS. There are footsteps. James crosses to a window which faces out over the garden which is large and well-kept. At some distance away a gardener is raking leaves. Another man comes and talks to him and then disappears from sight. This is MATHEW, Anne Barrington's husband.

The door opens slowly. TOM, the ten year old son of Matthew, stares at James.

After a pause.

JAMES
Hello.

TOM
Hello.

JAMES
I'm waiting for your mother.

TOM
She said awfully sorry, make yourself comfortable, she won't be long. .

JAMES
Thanks.

TOM
Why not sit down and wait?

JAMES
Okay, I will.

TOM
She's not my mother, anyway. My mother's in Italy.

JAMES
Oh, I see.

TOM
Have you come to talk about me?

JAMES
Not at all. History.

At this Tom leaves the door and advances into the room.

TOM
What period?
JAMES
Suez. 1956.

TOM
Do you want to hear my list of English Kings and Queens?

JAMES
All right.

TOM
It goes from Henry VIII.
(In rapid monotone)

JAMES
What about the Cromwells?

TOM
They don't count.

Anne Barrington comes in. Aged about fifty-five, very attractive still, and fit.

ANN
Mr. Penfield. I am sorry to have kept you.

JAMES
It's kind of you to see me.

ANN
Tom, Daddy would like to see you in the garden. And will you ask Betty to bring us some coffee. And remember to say 'please'.

Tom leaves. They watch as he closes the door with exaggerated care.

ANN
He's a little unhappy. I hope he wasn't a nuisance?

JAMES
He was delightful.

INT. STUDY - DAY

Ten minutes later. Anne sits behind her desk, James sits across from her. The HOUSEKEEPER sets down a tray and
leaves.

Anne appraises James and deals with the coffee, and for the first time in the film we take a long, hard look at him too. The light flatters. The notebook at his side, his patience and deference, the well-cut suit...he is at least credible.

ANN
My first husband worked for the BBC. I doubt if anyone there remembers him now, just another long dead diligent administrator. He would have been useful in the fight to preserve the BBC's independence during the Suez crisis — one of the few things he was passionate about. I became involved too. I started work on a book that would have been published on the tenth anniversary of Suez. Then he died, and I loots the will to write it. By the time I was over his death, other books had been published, and it wasn't worth going on.

JAMES
What a shame.

ANN
It wasn't much more than a pot boiler. Suez was very important for our generation. I didn't want it to be forgotten. And that's why I'd like to be able to help you. But really Mr. Penfield, I looked through my notes before you came, they're all very much out of date, there's been so much published since. I don't think I'm your man.

JAMES
(smiling, uncertain)
Well, I am a great admirer of your work. I read your books on Chartism when I was still at school. I'm a journalist, not a historian. There are questions of method, and approach. I wondered--

ANN
I see. Are you a socialist, Mr. Penfield?

JAMES
Yes.

ANN
Good. Suez was a minefield for both parties.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The Garden, same time. Tom wanders aimlessly near the house. He comes to one of the library windows and peers in.


Tom hears his father in the distance calling his name. He leaves the window and runs.

INT. CONSERVATORY - DAY

Lunchtime. A table spread with white tablecloth, salads and wine. Set for two.

ANN
My husband apologises for not joining us. It's not too cold for you, Mr. Penfield?

JAMES
It's fine, thank you.

ANN
Since you are a friend of my daughter's, I think I'm entitled to call you James, don't you think?

JAMES
Please do. I was beginning to wonder who this Mr. Penfield was.

ANN
And I'd like you to call me Ann.

James raises his glass.

JAMES
To Ann.

ANN
To James. I remember what it was I was going to say. We were talking about forgetfulness. The Czech writer Kundera has one of his characters say that the struggle of man against tyranny is the struggle of memory against
forgetting.

JAMES
History books are first onto the bonfires.

ANN
If we leave the remembering to historians then the struggle is already lost. Everyone must have a memory, everyone needs to be a historian. In this country, for example, we're in danger of losing hard-won freedoms by dozing off in a perpetual present.

James is uneasy, a little out of his depth.

ANN
Here I am lecturing you. Have some pâté.

JAMES
Thanks.

A Pause. Ann has already emptied her glass. James has hardly touched his. Ann refills her own. Then James, lightly, wanting to be back on familiar ground.

JAMES
So I can go ahead and be a historian without feeling like a poseur. I shall be fulfilling a citizen's duty.

ANN
If you like. But don't be too modest, James. The citizen's duty is to remember, not necessarily to write books. You are highly qualified. You're a responsible journalist doing what sounds to me like a very demanding job. Every day you take decisions that depend on your sense of history. A genuine tyranny would have to get rid of people like you.

JAMES
You're kind to be so encouraging.

ANN
I think you'll do very well.

She smiles and briefly touches James's hand. James looks up impassive.
EXT. BACK GATE TO GARDEN - DAY

Anne and James are returning from an after-lunch walk. We have a glimpse of the landscape we will see more of on James's return.

As they walk they arrive through a back gate into the Barrington garden. A jet fighter races through the sky.

ANN
I've met some of her colleagues, I'm afraid they struck me as rather empty people. Very ambitious, and charming too. But not serious. No politics.

They walk on.

ANN
I do worry about Susan. Have you known her long? She hasn't mentioned you.

JAMES
Actually, we've only just met. But we're quiet good friends.

ANN
It's a pity she couldn't make it up here today.

JAMES
Yes.

ANN
She'll be here next weekend. Why don't you come too, James? I'll show you the marshes properly. If you're lucky you might even see the first of the geese arriving from Siberia.

JAMES
Well, I'd hate to be a nuisance.

ANN
Don't be silly. I'll look out some more Suez material for you. You'll be very welcome.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

They come round the front of the house to James's car. He opens the door and shakes Ann's hand.

JAMES
Thank you.

ANN
We'll see you next week, and if--

Matthew's car comes sweeping up the drive. Tom is in the front seat. Matthew stops his car so that his front door is by James.

MATTHEW is fifty. A director of commercials for cinema and television. Breezy, chunky-faced, keen to be taken seriously. Essentially good-humoured.

ANN
I wish you wouldn't drive so fast, Mat, dearest.

MATHEW
I'll get a bike. I promise. Hi! Just off?

Matthew and James shake hands over the car doors.

ANN
Matthew my husband. James. James is coming to stay next weekend.

MATHEW
Very good. Well, I'll see you then.

He strides away with Tom.

MATHEW
Come on, Tom. Let's see if we can get this thing working.

James pulls away. Ann stands watching him till he is out of sight, and a little longer after that.

EXT. A149 ROAD - DAY

Ten minutes later. James drives along the A149 near Clay. He has the window wide open, the radio on. The great expanse of salt marsh is to his right. The huge sky. The mood is triumphant.

EXT. CENTRAL NORFOLK - DAY

Half an hour later. A lonely road in central Norfolk. James brings the car to a sudden halt. He switches off the engine. In the silence we are able to hear the car cassette player. As it plays, James walks round the car till he finds his flat tyre. He rummages with growing ill-temper in the boot. Two cases of empty wine bottles, a mildewed towel and swimming trunks, but no jack.
LECTURER (V.O.)
(from tape)
There was a real desire on the
British part to appear virtuous
while behaving aggressively, and
the pursuit of virtue led to many
lies being told, most notable the
Prime Minister's in the House of
Commons on December 20 when he
said that there was 'no
foreknowledge that Israel would
attack Egypt'. Perhaps we should
reverse the question and ask
ourselves to what extent individuals
behave like governments, who are
bound to act in the national
interest which in turn is rarely
separable from the government's
interest, or that of the class it
represents...

Furious, he goes to the front of the car and snaps off the
tape machine, and stands jiggling his keys in the vast
silence.

A minute later. James sets off. The immensity of the
landscape, the incongruousness of his clothes...

EXT. LONELY ROAD - DAY

James, walking.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH WOOD - DAY

The road passes through a wood. When BETTY speaks, it
surprises both James and us.

She stands at the head of a little grass track that leads
into a wood. She carries a plastic carrier bag. She is
almost childlike in her friendliness.

BETTY
Are you the man from the BBC?

JAMES
What?

BETTY
Sorry. I didn't mean to frighten
you. I thought you must be from
the BBC.

(she advances)
We've been waiting, see. And you
don't exactly look like a farmer.
I'm Betty.

They shake hands.
JAMES
James Penfield.

BETTY
Come and meet the others. They've been waiting for you.

EXT. WOODS. AIRFIELD PERIMETER - DAY

James follows Betty through the woods. A rumbling and whining noise increases in violence and becomes deafening once they leave the wood and cross open ground towards a Military Air Base. The Peace Camp is near the perimeter fence. A ramshackle collection of tents, caravans, a tepee and a rough wooden shelter which is the communal area. A fire burns here. Various peace signs, Women's Movement sign and slogan. ('Fight War, Not Wars', etc.)

Three women are sitting around the fire. A little further off a MAN is chopping wood. One of the women, CARMEN, is over sixty. The other two are in their thirties. The man, PETE, is a vintage hippy. A good mix of regional accents among the campers. Betty leads James to the fire.

BETTY
I found a man from the BBC, but he's not the man.

CARMEN
Never mind. We'll just have to make do. Would you like a cup of tea? Jill, give the young man your cup.

JAMES
(Dodging smoke from the fire)
Thank you.

CARMEN
Sit on that log, dear.

JILL
Be careful though, it wobbles.

The others laugh.

JAMES
Er, listen, I... I've got a puncture. I wondered if I might borrow a jack.

JILL AND CAROL
Pete!

JAMES
Sorry to be a nuisance.

Pete ambles over. Inscrutable behind much hair. He registers no awareness of James. He smokes a roll-up.

CARMEN
Pete, do we have a jack?

Pete inhales, considers and nods almost imperceptibly.

CARMEN
Could you look it out for our friend?

Pete nods again and returns to chopping wood.

JILL
Is the tea all right? I didn't ask you if you wanted sugar.

JAMES
It's fine, thanks.

CARMEN
Now first of all, tell us your name.

JAMES

CARMEN
This is Jill, Carol, Betty, Mandy, Louise, Pete over there, and I'm Carmen.

The women smile and murmur hello as they are introduced. Their friendliness progressively disorientates James.

CARMEN
There's another fifteen of us out at a meeting.

CAROL
Would you like us to show you round the camp.

CARMEN
Let him drink his tea, poor man. I don't know what's happened to this other fellow. He said he'd be here at three.

JILL
Lost!

BETTY
What do you do at the BBC, James?
JAMES
I work in radio news, in London.

A chorus of 'Oh well then ... 'and 'Great!'

JAMES
But I'm not an interviewer or a correspondent.

CARMEN
That doesn't matter. As long as we can get our message through to someone there. Jill, where are those handouts?

JILL
They're back here somewhere. They're a bit crumpled.

Pete hands a jack to James.

JAMES
Oh, great. Thanks.

Now James has his jack he begins to back away.

CARMEN
Give them here. This tells you how the Women's Peace Camp came to be set up. All local women at first, then we had support from women and men all over the country.

JAMES
Very good.

JILL
The response has been just amazing.

JAMES
Yes.

CARMEN
And this sheet tells you all about the base, the number of missiles they're going to have, what they think they're for and so on.

CAROL
We've had the local radio down here.

JAMES
Terrific.
But what we need is national coverage. It's difficult with this Falklands madness going on. Do you think you might be able to do something when you get back?

JAMES
I'll suggest it. Remember though, we're news, not features. It might help if you could get yourselves attacked by the police. Anyway, I'll be back with this soon. Thanks.

BETTY
(close up, eyes wide)
Ordinary people everywhere are saying 'No, we don't want these terrible weapons!' That's news!

JAMES
I won't be a moment.

EXT. PEACE CAMP - EVENING

James drives down the road towards the airbase. He stops his car well short of the camp. He takes the jack from the car and walks towards the camp. There are more people now moving in and out of the light of the fire. The sounds of voices, laughter, mostly female. A meal is being cooked. James sets down the jack where it can be found. He has been observed throughout by Pete, from the shadows. He speaks as James is turning back towards his car.

PETE
Off then?

JAMES
Er, yes, I put the jack by the ... hut there. Thanks for your help ... I... I have to be getting back ... so ... see you. And thanks ... and ... all the best.

Pete watches James walk away.

INT. TELEVISION COMPANY ENTRANCE/STAIRS - AFTERNOON

London. A day later. The television company where Susan works. James is late. The lift is out of order. He runs up several flights of stairs with diminishing energy.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Breathless, James bursts into the screening room. Susan is seated. Jeremy stands near her, leaning against a desk,
smoking. By contrast, they are calm.

JEREMY
Fortunate that I was here to keep Susan entertained.

JAMES
Sorry. Got held up. What are you doing here?

JEREMY
Delivering gossip and goodwill. It seems we'll both be doing Brighton.
(He starts to put on his coat)
Perhaps you should come too.

JAMES
(to Susan)
Will it be fun?

SUSAN
It was last year.

JEREMY
We might be able to dig out a couple of Suez survivors for you.

JAMES
Perhaps I will, then.

JEREMY
(Kissing on the cheek first Susan, then James)
I'm off. Let's meet. You promised to tell me about Norfolk.

JAMES
I'll ring you.

A brief pause and a slight awkwardness after Jeremy leaves.

SUSAN
(into microphone)
I think we're ready now, thank you. And how was Norfolk? Did you get on with my mother?

JAMES
I think she liked me.

SUSAN
Did she talk about me?

JAMES
No. We talked about history, and Siberian Geese.

The lights go down.

We SEE a series of FILM CLIPS about Suez: crowd scenes in Cairo; footage of the Fleet on its way from Malta; the actual invasion; parachutes; Eden at Downing Street; Lloyd at the airport; the protest meeting at Trafalgar Square; fighting in Suez streets.

James sneaks occasional looks at Susan throughout. We SEE her in profile, lit by the screen.

SUSAN
(As the first pictures come up)
It's not in chronological order. There's an hour of stuff, of which the director has to choose four minutes. What'll happen is that I'll choose it for him ... Does he look like a man on speed?

Our two minute sequence is presented to represent an hour of film. When at last it is over and the lights come up, there is a moment of stupefaction. Susan yawns and prepares to leave.

SUSAN
Do you think she's invited you up for her sake or for mine?

JAMES
(kissing Susan's fingers)
I haven't really thought about it.

SUSAN
(smiling, mischievous)
Well, you should.

James kisses Susan. She complies rather than responds. Susan disengages herself gently and gathers her things. She stands.

SUSAN
Well, must get on.

INT. NEWSROOM - EARLY MORNING

A day or two later. People are drifting out to go down the corridor to the morning news conference. James is one of the last to leave. On his way out he meets Charles, the newsreader from Scene two.
JAMES
Charles! I didn't know you were back. Have a good holiday?

CHARLES
Not too bad, thanks. How have you been?

JAMES
Working hard on that book I was telling you about. Coming to the meeting?

CHARLES
I'm not sure I can face it.

JAMES
Keep me company.

INT. CORRIDOR - EARLY MORNING

James steers Charles out of the newsroom and along the corridor. Only slowly does it become apparent that Charles is in a state of distress.

JAMES
How's Mary?

CHARLES
She's fine. Well, actually we've broken up. It's all over.

JAMES
No. That's terrible, Charles. What happened?

CHARLES
(on the edge of tears)
Look, I'd rather you didn't ask me questions. I can't talk about it.

They have reached the News Conference Room, but Charles walks on down the corridor to nurse his grief out of sight.

INT. NEWS CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

The News Conference Room. Ten minutes later. The same Editor. The same matter-of-factness and slight boredom.

EDITOR
....as it happens they got all their facts wrong anyway. I checked up. We reported the big peace march on Hyde Park last October, and a march on NATO headquarters in the spring, and the death of
whatsisname last month, the old CND man...

He looks round. It is not clear that anyone is listening.

EDITOR
What really gets to them, though they'll never admit it, these types, is that we give both sides, theirs and the government's. Multilateralists and unilateralists. Hawks and doves. As far as they're concerned, there's only one side to the question. Nuclear weapons are bad. Full stop. End of discussion. Anyone who says there's more to it than that is... what was it...

(He picks up a newspaper cutting)
'Under cover of an authoritative news service, propagating a military definition of reality.'

He pauses, relaxes into professional indifference.

EDITOR
Still. With the party conferences coming up in the autumn there's bound to be some action on that front and we'd be doing something anyway. It won't all be Falklands business. James, is there something in there for us, if we could tie it in with something else?

JAMES
Well, it's all a bit cranky and small scale. Vegetarians, hippies, disturbed housewives. Local radio story, I'd say, if that. They're mad.

EDITOR
Oh well. Just an idea. Now. Can we talk about this radio-car cock-up yesterday. Chris?

INT. NEWSROOM STUDIO - LATE MORNING.

Two hours later. The studio. James and Charles sit at the table, as in Scene Three. Charles reads. He is obviously distressed but his voice remains under control. James watches anxiously.

CHARLES
It was an emotional occasion.
Hundreds of small craft led by six fire tugs making fountains of water formed an escort flotilla, and four Wasp helicopters flew past in salute. In the City the Financial Times Ordinary Shares Index was down ten points an hour ago at 529.8. BBC Radio News.

In the Control Room, the minute hand of the clock reaches five past the hour; the sweep hand reaches the twelve on Charles's last word. The Controller pushes a button. Charles slumps forward.

JAMES
My God that was close! Well done, Charles. I knew you wouldn't let me down. But God! We almost didn't make it.

James is standing, gathering papers. He bustles out, indifferent. We CLOSE IN on Charles. Unseen by anyone, he is just beginning to cry.

INT. JAMES'S FLAT - EVENING

James is typing rapidly. There is a growing pile of typewritten sheets to one side. We go over his shoulder and look closely at the map, Egypt, the desert . . .

EXT. THE BARRINGTON HOUSE, NORFOLK - LATE MORNING

A few days later. James has just arrived and switched his engine off. But for the wind and birdsong, silence. There is no reply when he tries the front door. A note pinned to the door reads: 'Gone for a walk. Follow footpath. Susan.'

EXT. DYKE - DAY

James walks along the dyke, across the marshes. Below him, on the sand, in the distance, are two figures. James stops to watch them. Matthew and Susan are deep in conversation — evidently a serious matter. They seem to be making an agreement. Matthew puts his head on Susan's shoulder, and they walk on, unaware of James.

INT. DINING-ROOM - NIGHT

A burst of laughter. It is dinner. Seated are Ann, Matthew, Tom, Susan, James and JACEK, a professor from Central Europe, mid-sixties, an old friend of Ann's. Betty, the housemaid, serves.

JACEK
(heavy accent)
The second is less pleasant. A
Pole is confronted by a German and a Russian soldier. Which should he shoot first? The German first, the Russian second. Duty before pleasure.

A more subdued response.

TOM
I've heard that one at school.

JACEK
Then you are a well-educated young man.

(to Ann)
Tom has been reciting his English kings and queens to me.

JAMES
And to me.

JACEK
Haven't you socialist historians in the West made kings and queens out of date in schools?

ANN
We keep trying.

MATTHEW
I can tell you that the history of the monarchy is alive and well in the national memory. I shot a commercial - a series of vignettes of kings and queens — Henry VIII, Mary —

TOM
Elizabeth I.

MATTHEW
Elizabeth I, and so on — and we had a fantastic response.

SUSAN
What were you advertising?

MATTHEW
Oh, some new lager.

JACEK
I'm pleased to hear that there is at least some national memory. I agree with Ann that the British forget too quickly. Here you have enviable freedoms, and yet no monuments to those who struggled
to win them for you. Now that is why I think there is hope for the Poles, whoever occupies their country. They remember their dates, and they keep adding to them. December 1981, Gdansk 1980, 1976, 1970. Katyn 1940, 1922 and so on. It's a subversive list. Say it out loud on the streets of Warsaw and you might get arrested.

During this last speech of Jacek's we see James trying to catch Susan's eye. She glances up and looks away.

INT. STAIRS - NIGHT

An hour later.

Wine glass in hand James goes upstairs. He comes to Tom's room.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Susan has been seeing Tom into bed. James watches from the doorway. She kisses her brother and turns out the light.

TOM
Don't close the door. Don't turn out the hall light.

SUSAN
I won't. Goodnight.

TOM
'Night.

James and Susan linger in the semi-darkness outside Tom's room. From downstairs comes the sound of boisterous conversation.

JAMES
I haven't seen much of you.

SUSAN
No. It's a bit of a madhouse. For some reason a lot of my mother's friends specialise in monologues.

JAMES
He's all right, the professor.

Tom comes out of his room.

TOM
Ah, Susy, it...
SUSAN
Tom . . . bed! Go on.

Tom retreats into his bedroom. James and Susan move to the head of the stairs.

JAMES
Look, will you come on a walk with me tomorrow?

SUSAN
I might.

JAMES
Might?

ANN (O.S.)
(calling from below)
Susan, James, are you up there?

SUSAN
Hello, Mummy.

Ann comes half-way up the stairs.

ANN
Betty's made some coffee. Do you want some?

SUSAN
Yes, we do.

ANN
Well, we're in the library.

Ann lingers a moment. She wants James downstairs. As soon as she has gone, he kisses Susan.

JAMES
Might?

SUSAN
(Strokes his face)
Yes. Might. Remember, you're here to talk to my mother.

She leads the way downstairs.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The library. A fire burns. Ann pours the coffee and is highly aware of James when he comes in. Jacek is a little drunk.

JACEK
Ah, Susan, James. Come and judge.
I am interrogating Matthew. I am
asking him how a director of advertisements and a socialist get along so well together. How does the lion lie down with the lamb.

ANN
By staying in town all week. And lying down with several lambs.

MATTHEW
Not so. We meet half way. Ann has grown very fond of her material comforts. She even owns land with keep out signs posted on the boundaries. And I...

ANN
(wearily, to James)
I bought a wood because a local farmer was going to cut it down. The signs were already there.

JACEK
And you...

MATTHEW
I earn so much money at what I do that I can't even begin to defend it. I used to shoot a whole line about the value and necessity of advertising...

ANN
You were more interesting then.

MATTHEW
...but now I'm an agnostic. So is Ann, if she'd only admit it.

ANN
Come on, James. Defend me from this tripe.

Expectant pause. Susan smirks. James is out of his depth.

JAMES
Well, there's no reason why a socialist shouldn't like comfort, or own a wood, or be very rich. The problem is making all that available to everybody ...

All except Ann groan dismissively.

MATTHEW
Rubbish!
JACEK
Ah, if everybody is to have everything, then you need to plan very carefully, you need to control the future. This is the tragedy of Marxism. The future is not ours to control, nothing turns out as we plan it.  
(to Ann)
You remember that charming note of Enzensberger's, Spanish anarchists in 1898 looked forward to a glorious future after the revolution — a world of incredibly tall shining buildings, with elevators that would save climbing stairs, electric light for all, garbage disposal chutes and wonderful household gadgets. This vision is now a reality in our cities, the victory has been won and it looks just like defeat. . .

Susan yawns conspicuously.Everybody turns.

SUSAN
(unrepentant)
Sorry. Tired.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The following morning. If possible, a beautiful day. Betty is washing up a large pile of breakfast things. From outside, the sound of much hilarity.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

On the back lawn Tom, Susan and Matthew are playing football. To one side, Jacek leans on his stick and watches.

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING

The library. Ann and James sit facing each other by the fireplace. The game of football can be heard. From where James sits he can see past and into the gardens, the occasional glimpse of Susan, the enticing sunlight.

ANN
The references are to Hansard or to newspapers. I haven't got the actual speeches now. You'll have to chase them up.

JAMES
I will, thanks.
ANN
These are transcripts of various radio broadcasts, including Gaitskill's, the one they tried to stop. You ought to have that ...

Betty knocks and enters.

BETTY
Excuse me. Phone call for Mr Penfield.

ANN
Take it here.

JAMES
Thanks. Hello... how did you get this number? I see. Look, I'm really sorry about last week, I... no, I'm up here researching something I... is she?... well, don't they have painkillers for that?... Oh, yeah... Look, tell her I'll be there... I can't just drop everything. It'll probably be the day after tomorrow... Right... Ok... yes, goodbye.
(to Ann) It's a relative of mine. She's not very well.
(He sits down again) I'm sorry. What were you saying?

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A couple of hours later. Susan sits on a bench re-tying the lace of her walking boot. James stands, waiting.

SUSAN
Jeremy phoned this morning

JAMES
What did he want?

SUSAN
He's making plans for Brighton. He thought we could travel down together.

JAMES
That'll be fun

SUSAN
In your car

JAMES
Why not.
Ann appears from the house. Tom follows.

ANN
Hello. Anyone for a walk? Tom isn't, I can tell you.

JAMES
Well, we were just...

SUSAN
Don't you want to walk, Tom?

TOM
No.

SUSAN
Actually, I've been once today already. I'll stay here with him.

ANN
James and I have been indoors all morning.

SUSAN
Well, he's very keen to go.

She walks with Tom towards the house.

JAMES
Susan...

Holding Tom's hand, she turns and smiles.

SUSAN
See you when you get back.

James has been quickly outmanoeuvred by Susan. He stands awkwardly for a moment, collecting himself.

ANN
Shall we go?

JAMES
Yes.

EXT. DYKE - DAY

The dyke across the marshes, the sand dunes, the sea. During Ann's monologue (broken up where appropriate) we see the two sometimes IN CLOSE, sometimes as MINUTE FIGURES in this immense landscape.

James follows Ann along the dyke. They stop and she points out a wooded hill, well inland. Later...

ANN
Then I began to listen to what the well-off were saying about the poor now — the war had just ended, and the language was much the same as it had been before the first Reform Act. A small minority thought that England was really theirs, they had made it, they owned it. The rest, the wage earners, were foreigners, outsiders intent on wrecking it all.

JAMES
Didn't Evelyn Waugh say that the country under Atlee seemed to be under enemy occupation?

ANN
Did he? I left school and worked for the Labour Party. My older brother, George, had just been killed in Greece, and he'd been an active member. I hero-worshipped him. He was 25 years old ...

(she trails off)
It was an exciting time for us, those first couple of years after the war. We thought the country was about to become a true democracy. I can understand why people of your generation want to write about that time. They feel betrayed. They want to know what went wrong.

JAMES
What went wrong?

ANN
Oh, many things. Inertia ... Stalin and the Cold War... a failure of nerve. We took the seediest, most inefficient fifth of the economy into State care, paid out millions for it, put the same old duffers in charge. A new broom with very old bristles. When the Tories were returned, I went and sat in the BM and wrote my little book on Chartism.

Later. Walking home

ANN.
I don't like admitting it, but the truth is, I am happy. Matthew's right. I like comfort. I like
doing my own work and not having to teach. I love my house and the garden, and my wood.  
(she stops)
And I'm very happy walking here with you. (She takes his hand.)
You have such a quiet, strong sense of purpose. Energy. I think I'll rely on you to take the uncomfortable stands in life.
I've done my bit.

They smile at each other.

Ann moves in to kiss James passionately. He complies.

A jet fighter flies in low over the marshes.

INT. DRAWING-ROOM - EVENING

Susan and Tom, who wears pyjamas and dressing-gown, are playing Chess. James watches Susan. Tom is noisily, bossily instructing her in the rules. Matthew is approaching James, about to speak.

MATTHEW
I just might give you a ring when we get back to London. There's one or two things I'd like to... Will you let me have your number before you leave? Have you ever watched a commercial being made?

JAMES
No.

MATTHEW
Well, it's worth seeing.

Ann appears in the doorway.

ANN
James...

There is a moment of awkwardness. James squeezes past Matthew and goes towards Ann.

JAMES
Excuse me.

INT. LIBRARY - EVENING

The library. A moment later. James has just come in. Ann hands him a silver framed photograph.

ANN
I wanted to show you. It was taken
six months before he died.

The resemblance between James and the dead brother should be clear. James studies the photograph. He looks up. Ann is gazing at him steadily.

INT. DINING-ROOM - NIGHT

Half an hour later. Ann, Matthew, Susan and James. A certain strain. The sound of knives and forks only. In the hall the PHONE RINGS. They hear Betty pick it up. Still holding the receiver she pushes open the dining-room door.

    BETTY
    (to Matthew)
    It's for you, Mr Fox.

The others go on eating, acutely aware of Matthew's conversation.

    MATTHEW
    (from the hall)
    Hello... Oh, hi... well, you know...

He pushes the door shut with his foot. James looks at Susan. Susan glances at her mother. Ann knows it is one of Matthew's girlfriends. She goes on eating, a brave but failing attempt to appear untouched.

INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Very late, the same night. From the point of view of an intruder we move into the room. James is asleep.

    ANNE'S VOICE
    (whispers)
    James... James.

He snaps awake. We SEE what he sees. Ann sits on the edge of his bed, in tears. She touches his face. She leans over and embraces him.

INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A little later. The bedside lamp is on. James lies still, his expression numb. The bedclothes are in disarray. His bedroom door is just closing.

INT. NEWSROOM - LATE MORNING

The Newsroom at its busiest, as in Scene One. Linger on the activity before finding James. He sits writing a report in longhand, referring to News Agency material. Much dictating going on around him, so that Philip who sits across from him has almost to shout to be heard. He has picked up a phone and is covering the mouthpiece.
PHILIP
It's that lady from Norfolk again.

JAMES
I'm not here.

PHILIP
I'm terribly sorry. He doesn't seem to be here ... No ... Yes, if I see him, I will. ... Goodbye. She's going to phone back.

JAMES
Next time tell her I've gone away.

CHARLES
Aha. James giving some woman the old heave-ho.

JAMES
(rim smile)
Exactly that.

INT. JAMES'S FLAT - EVENING

TIGHT SHOT of Edward on the phone.

EDWARD
Hello, you don't know me. My name's Edward Long. I'm a friend of James Penfield. He asked me to phone you. I don't know what any of this means, but he said you would understand ... Yes, that's right. He said he's got to go away for a while, and that he'll be writing to you and please don't try and contact him ... Hello?

Pulling away, we see where we are. James sits in a chair reading a magazine. God, that was terrible. Don't ever ask me another favour like that.

JAMES
You were wonderful. I'm very grateful.

EDWARD
She hung up. Why couldn't you just write to her?

JAMES
I will, sooner or later. (standing)
Trouble is I hate writing letters. Now, where are we going to eat?
INT. FILM STUDIO - MORNING

What we SEE first is the actual set and only subsequently the surrounding technical apparatus of film-making. We are suddenly in a deeply contented pre-war middle-class sitting-room. Guide track: sweet, period music. Dad sits in an armchair reading a newspaper. A pipe is near at hand. To one side, a wireless. At his feet, a girl plays with a doll; a boy plays with a model steam engine.

Mum enters with a tray of steaming hot drinks. As she sets down the tray on the arm of Dad's chair, the music peaks and the children half rise and arrange themselves on either side of Dad's legs. Everyone smiles up at Mum. Once this has unfolded, we pull back to see the camera crew, continuity, make-up etc. James is standing to one side watching.

MATTHEW
And ... cut. Steve?

STEVE
((camera-man))
Not the best, guv'nor.

MATTHEW
Right... we'll go again, please.

Matthew to ad lib instructions to actors and crew. He notices James.

MATTHEW
James, good, you made it. We're just going to do one more take, then we'll break for lunch.

The commercial is set up and shot again, with Matthew continuing to give ad libbed directions. As soon as the take is over, Matthew snatches his jacket, gives a quick kiss to a young woman who could well be his current lover, and steers James out of the studio.

MATTHEW
Right, James. Come on. Let's go before the clients get hold of me.

INT. PUB - DAY

Lunch time. Matthew stands at the bar where he is buying drinks and lunch. Then the two men sit at a small table face to face.

MATTHEW
I'll tell you another thing. We might have led the world once into the Industrial Revolution, now we
lead with television commercials. We're the best, it's as simple as that. Even the Americans will admit it now ... the camera work, the acting, the scripts, special effects. We've got the lot. Nearly all the good directors here have ambitions to make serious films.

(a sudden laugh)
That food you're eating.

JAMES
Yes.

MATTHEW
What would you call it?

JAMES
I dunno. Ploughman's Lunch.

MATTHEW
Ploughman's Lunch. Traditional English fare.

JAMES
U-huh.

MATTHEW
In fact it's the invention of an advertising campaign they ran in the early sixties to encourage people to eat in pubs. A completely successful fabrication of the past, the Ploughman's Lunch was.

We look at James's plate, the unappetising food. Matthew takes a long drink.

MATTHEW
Listen, James. There's something else I want to talk to you about.

Matthew pauses.

MATTHEW
I'm pretty broadminded, and I'd rather be frank than have everybody misunderstanding one another. If you see what I mean.

James does not.

MATTHEW
Susan told me that your visits to Norfolk had ... well, an ulterior motive.
JAMES
She said that?

MATTHEW
You weren't really interested in Suez at all. Incredibly enough, you were interested in my wife.

JAMES
Now listen...

MATTHEW
No, no, let me go on before you get the wrong idea. Ann and I have kept to our separate bedrooms for the last three years. And I can't imagine that Susan hasn't hinted at the kind of life I lead in London. I'm not telling you how to run your affairs. I'm just saying ... I don't mind. I'm giving you permission.

We are CLOSE IN on James's reaction.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

James drives towards Susan's flat. Jeremy sprawls in the back seat, slowly peeling the foil from a champagne bottle. Both are well-dressed. As they draw up outside Susan's flat, Jeremy leans forward and murmurs in James's ear.

JEREMY
Still in love?

JAMES
I'm not sure.

He presses the horn and gets out. Jeremy gets out too. Susan comes down the steps. She is also smartly dressed. She kisses James. He takes her small suitcase and puts it in the boot. She kisses Jeremy.

JEREMY
Darling Susan. You look like an angel. But where's your hat?

SUSAN
Oh no!

JEREMY
They won't let you in without one.

James hands Susan into the front seat.

JEREMY
Brighton, James!

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

The car slips through the London traffic.

INT. JAMES'S CAR - DAY

In the car, a few minutes later. Much hilarity. Susan is holding a glass ready as Jeremy eases out the cork.

SUSAN
Don't point it at James!

JEREMY
Voila!

The cork flies. The champagne is poured. Susan hands a glass to James.

JEREMY
To the ninety-ninth conference of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations!

All repeat the toast with various stumbling inaccuracies.

INT. CAR PARK, BRIGHTON - DAY

James drives into a multi-storey car park. Jeremy gets out of the car and goes to look at the view which is of modern office developments.

JEREMY
Hah - the seaside! Isn't it heavenly!

Susan joins Jeremy.

SUSAN
Gorgeous.

Jeremy is taking out his Press Pass and pinning it to his lapel.

SUSAN
What have you got there?

JEREMY
You'd look naked without one.

SUSAN
Oh, yes! Where's mine? I want to look like you.

James joins them. There follows a little charade of mock sympathy.
SUSAN
What about James?

Jeremy and Susan chorus a sympathetic moan.

JEREMY
We'll see what we can do.

SUSAN
Promise?

JEREMY
Promise.

EXT. BRIGHTON PROMENADE - DAY

James, Jeremy and Susan walk along the promenade and cross the road towards the Grand Hotel. The Conference Centre is visible and so too are the POLICE and DEMONSTRATORS. Jeremy has linked arms with Susan. James lags behind a little. Jeremy tells a joke, barely audible above the SOUND of TRAFFIC and the CHANTS of the PROTESTORS. Susan giggles as she and Jeremy skip forward to dodge the traffic.

INT. LOBBY, GRAND HOTEL - DAY

The lobby is crowded with DELEGATES, MPs, PRESS and TV PEOPLE.

JEREMY
There goes my deep throat. Excuse me.

Jeremy darts away. Susan is looking about her.

JAMES
Shall we have a drink or something?

SUSAN
Oh ... excuse me. There's Nicholas.

James is left.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - AFTERNOON

DELEGATES and MPs, and MEDIA PEOPLE, are taking tea on the long balcony of the Grand Hotel. Jeremy is interviewing an MP. James and Susan sit at the same table listening.

JEREMY
Then, the theory goes, you'll be back in favour. In line for a real job. Is that right?

MP
Well, it's a theory ... interesting.
Oh, excuse me, there's Willy.

The MP makes off.

JEREMY
I want to see him too.

Jeremy leaves. James comes and sits closer to Susan.

JAMES
We don't seem to get much time to talk.

SUSAN
I know. I'm sorry.

An announcement comes through on the hotel's P.A.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Miss Susan Barrington, Miss Susan Barrington. A phone call for you.

Susan makes a half-hearted apologetic gesture and leaves. As she goes she passes Jeremy who holds a Press Pass for James. He kneels by James's chair and pins the card to his lapel.

JEREMY
General Sir James Penfield ... services during the Norfolk campaign.

EXT. CONFERENCE CENTRE - LATE AFTERNOON

The three walk towards the Conference Centre, along the gauntlet of PROTESTORS and ONLOOKERS. Among them are Carmen and Betty, holding a placard which says 'Women's Peace Camp'. They catch sight of James. Some puzzled recognition. James hurries away from the women and through the doors into the Centre.

INT. PRESS BALCONY, CONFERENCE CENTRE - DAY

James, Susan and Jeremy come onto the Press balcony and find their seats while FRANCIS PYM delivers a speech.

PYM
It was they who rebuffed aggression, they who struck such a powerful blow for democracy ...

JAMES
(to Susan)
I managed to book us a table at Wheelers.

PYM
I believe this will prove of wider significance even than the event itself. We were seen to be fighting to defend principles which are fundamental to free nations everywhere, and our reputation has been enhanced as a result.

JEREMY
(to Susan)
Francis is in cracking form, don't you think?

INT. BAR - EARLY EVENING

James, Jeremy and Susan. Journalists, delegates etc.

SUSAN
(triumphant, excited)
It was incredible. He came back, made a pompous little bow and said, 'My dear girl you may film me all afternoon if you wish.' And he's promised not to talk to the Press.

JEREMY
It's because he desires you. The women get all the breaks at these conferences.

SUSAN
It's true! I was here last year doing a piece, remember? I was in the bar with all these Northern trade unionists and their sponsored MPs. They were all incredibly fat and beery, huge trousers and braces. And so sweet. They all stood round me like children saying 'You! Working for television? You're just a young thing.' They wouldn't let me buy drinks even when I told them the programme was paying. They kept looking at my pass which was pinned here and saying
(Mock Yorkshire.)
'Oo, can I?'

JEREMY
Then one of them was sick all over your new dress.

SUSAN
No, he wasn't. He just lowered himself into a bar stool and said...
(Yorkshire)
'Oo I do feel bad. I 'ad three
pints of lager and six onion bajees!'

They all laugh.

SUSAN
I've got to go. See you at dinner.

She kisses them both. They watch her go. Their different expressions.

JEREMY
Six onion bajees! Great girl.
(then, confidential)
Did you shake the mother off?

JAMES
Yes, finally.

JEREMY
Big mistake, I think. You might have learned a lot.

JAMES
(sudden)
Are you up to something?

Jeremy shrugs innocently and shows his empty hands.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTRE - DAY

James wanders through the Centre in search of Susan. He enters the debating chamber. MICHAEL HESELTINE is addressing the Conference. James wanders out to the space below the platform where journalists and photographers are gathered. He goes up the aisles between the seated delegates. No sign of Susan. He leaves the chamber.

HESELTINE
....left-wing councils employ labour candidates in the paid voluntary sector. We now face a professional left financed at the ratepayer's and tax payer's expense! Just more money is not a solution in itself. As we have given more money to the professional left...

INT. LOBBY, CONFERENCE CENTRE. DAY

Much later. James crosses the crowded lobby, still in search of Susan.

INT. STAIRS, CONFERENCE CENTRE - DAY

James climbs the stairs to the Press balcony. He hears Mrs Thatcher's voice, and from the street below, the
chanting of protestors.

THATCHER (O.S.)
This is not going to be a speech about the Falklands campaign, although I would be proud to make one. But I want to say just this because it is true for all our people.

INT. PRESS BALCONY - DAY

James passes through the doors and finds a seat.

THATCHER
The spirit of the South Atlantic was the spirit of Britain at her best. It has been said that we surprised the world, that British patriotism was rediscovered in those spring days. Mr President, it was never really lost!

James suddenly notices Susan down on the lower floor. She passes through the doors and is gone. James gets to his feet.

THATCHER
But it would be no bad thing if the feeling that swept over the country then were to continue to inspire us. But if there was any doubt about the determination of the British people...

Jeremy and Susan come through the doors onto the Press balcony. James stops. They have not seen him. He watches as they stand together. Clearly a new intimacy has been established.

THATCHER
... it was removed by men and women who a few months ago brought a renewed sense of pride and self-respect to our country.

Jeremy kisses the nape of Susan's neck. They are not interested in staying for the speech. James watches stonily as they leave.

THATCHER
They were for the most part young. Let all of us here, and in the wider audience outside, pause and reflect...

Numbed, James returns to his seat.
THATCHER
...on what we who stayed at home
owe to those who sailed and fought
and lived and died and won. If
this is tomorrow's generation,
then Britain has little to fear in
the years to come!

Mix to the last sentence of the Prime Minister's speech.

THATCHER
We will tell the people the truth,
and the people will be our judge!

James sits through the standing ovation. The delegates
cheer, Land of Hope and Glory' is sung. James chews his
nails.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTRE - DAY

Hours later. WORKMEN are dismantling the platforms, taking
away props, taking down the Conference backdrop and slogans.
In LONG-SHOT we SEE Jeremy making his way between the rows
of chairs. James pursues him enraged, shouting. The ad
libbed obscenity can barely be heard.

EXT. BRIGHTON SEA FRONT - DUSK

James and Jeremy.

James's rage is spent. It has collapsed into bitterness.
The two men stop under a street lamp.

JEREMY
Susan and I are very old friends,
James.

JAMES
Fuck off.

JEREMY
And you were obviously getting
nowhere with her. I was waiting
for the right moment to tell you
that.

JAMES
My God. You even cooked up that
Norfolk trip.

JEREMY
It might have worked. Really. I
would have been delighted for you
if it had. But she wasn't
interested. Not my fault.
JAMES
You're a piece of shit

JEREMY
I've known Susan for more than fifteen years. James, we're old allies.

At this last word, James looks up. Jeremy walks away.

INT. JAMES'S FLAT - DAY

A few weeks later. We don't see James. We SEE and HEAR words pounding onto the PAGE. A fury in the typing. The page is pulled clear. SILENCE. We STAY ON the TYPEWRITER.

INT. BBC NEWSROOM - DAY

James is leaving in a hurry. He pulls on a thick overcoat, gathers up some papers, ignores someone who calls after him as he leaves.

EXT. LANGHAM PLACE - DAY

James leaves Broadcasting House and walks towards Oxford Circus.

INT. GOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Gold stands by his desk as James comes in, pouring two glasses of wine.

GOLD
James... I can't begin to tell you how pleased we all are. (he hands James a glass) Congratulations, and I really mean it.

JAMES
Thank you.

GOLD
It's everything we wanted. A very good read. A terrific piece of work. So, here's to you and Suez.

JAMES
And to history.

CLOSE IN, the glasses touch.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A group of mourners round a grave. A grey day. A priest reads from the Book of Common Prayer, but his voice is
virtually lost to us. We find James's father, hunched in his overcoat, face immobile with grief. Next to him, James, expressionless.

James glances at his watch.

FREEZE FRAME. OPTICAL ZOOM.

THE END